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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: DPRK

11. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused their coverage December 19 on Taiwan's new regulations on international air tickets. The issue is that abbreviations, codes, and information regarding weight allowances on international tickets are hard to understand. Taiwan's Civil Aeronautics Administration has therefore summoned airlines for a meeting, and they reached an agreement to add Chinese-language explanations to these tickets starting July 2007. In terms of editorials and commentaries, Commentator Antonio Chiang opined in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily" that the Six-Party Talks are never-ending but in vain. Chiang elaborated that this is because the Bush administration has become a lame duck, and it cannot deal with the nuclear issue in Iran and on the Korean Peninsula at the same time. Chiang suggested that the United States allow all countries in East Asia to join the nuclear club [in order to solve the DPRK issue]. End summary.

A) "Never Ending Talk"

Commentator Antonio Chiang opined in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily" [circulation: 500,000] that (12/19):

"... The United States originally took a strong position toward Iraq in terms of the development of nuclear weapons, but now it can do almost nothing. In order to improve the situation in Iraq, some have proposed that the United States should improve relations with Iran, or even cooperate with Iran. The Bush administration has become a lame duck, and it cannot deal with the nuclear issue in Iran and on the Korean Peninsula at the same time.

"Although China and South Korea do not hope that North Korea develops nuclear weapons, they are more worried about the disaster that will happen after the collapse of the North Korean regime. Hence, China and South Korea can only persuade North Korea indirectly, and the international pressure has not really pressured North Korea.

"Several U.S. experts consider that the United States cannot control this situation [of developing nuclear weapons] even if it wants to. Why not just let China and South Korea face directly the consequences of nuclear weapons [development] in North Korea? Why not just let Japan, South Korea, or even Taiwan develop nuclear arms, and let them all join the nuclear club?"

WANG